



Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 3 Operational Guidance: Annual Discussions

Annual discussions facilitate the ELIR process and provide an important opportunity for information sharing between QAA Scotland and the institution. Since the introduction of the enhancement-led approach in 2003, the Scottish higher education sector has adopted an informal protocol for sharing information often referred to as 'no surprises'. Under the 'no surprises' arrangements, institutions can seek advice from, and provide information to, QAA Scotland officers.

Annual discussion meetings are intended to be useful to the institution, and therefore there is flexibility around the agenda and who attends. In general, these annual meetings are held between a QAA Scotland officer and a small group of staff and student representatives from the institution. Following the meeting, the QAA Scotland officer writes to the institution to confirm any action points and outline the key topics explored.

In the third ELIR cycle there is an increased emphasis on student partnership, including ensuring student representatives are present for the annual discussion meetings and that the agendas are relevant to student interests. Therefore, the institution should consult with student representatives on the draft agenda for the meeting.

QAA Scotland will contact the institution to identify a mutually convenient date for the annual discussion to take place, taking into account the date of the previous annual meeting and the institution's position in the ELIR cycle. The institution is asked to invite the colleagues it wishes to attend, including at least one student representative. The institution is also asked to identify an agenda for the meeting, based on the indicative topics below, but there is flexibility around the precise agenda items to ensure the meeting has value for the institution. The institutional contact is asked to agree the agenda with the QAA Scotland officer and provide information to support the meeting as indicated below.

Indicative topics for discussion

- 1 Update on institution-led review: this might include themes from the institution's annual report to the Scottish Funding Council, outcomes from the reviews, the method of review being used, and any changes to the review schedule.
- 2 Current developments in student engagement at the institution: this might include progress with activity highlighted in the student partnership agreement or equivalent document.
- 3 Progress with ELIR, relevant to the institution's position in the cycle: this could include preparations for ELIR, the follow-up response or event, and/or progress with actions arising from ELIR.
- 4 Information sharing on matters relevant to ELIR: this might include updating QAA Scotland on strategic developments at the institution and/or sharing current sector activity.
- 5 Other matters the institution and/or students' association wish to discuss.

Documentation to support the annual discussion meeting

The institution is not expected to prepare material especially for the annual discussions. It is anticipated that the meetings will be supported by a set of existing information, such as:

- the definitive internal document(s) describing the approach taken to institution-led quality review, including information about the forward schedule of reviews
- the institution-led quality review reports for the previous 12 months
- any internal documents analysing the outcomes from institution-led quality reviews or evaluating the review method used
- information relating to changes in the institution's approach to quality enhancement
- information relating to developments in student engagement at the institution
- the most recent annual institutional report to the Scottish Funding Council relating to institution-led quality reviews.